



# Brownfields Assessment Demonstration Pilot

*Danbury, CT*

Outreach and Special Projects Staff (5101)

Quick Reference Fact Sheet

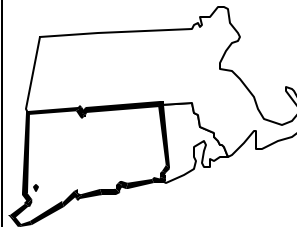
EPA's Brownfields Economic Redevelopment Initiative is designed to empower states, communities, and other stakeholders in economic redevelopment to work together in a timely manner to prevent, assess, safely clean up, and sustainably reuse brownfields. A brownfield is a site, or portion thereof, that has actual or perceived contamination and an active potential for redevelopment or reuse. EPA is funding: assessment demonstration pilot programs (each funded up to \$200,000 over two years), to assess brownfields sites and to test cleanup and redevelopment models; job training pilot programs (each funded up to \$200,000 over two years), to provide training for residents of communities affected by brownfields to facilitate cleanup of brownfields sites and prepare trainees for future employment in the environmental field; and, cleanup revolving loan fund programs (each funded up to \$500,000 over five years) to capitalize loan funds to make loans for the environmental cleanup of brownfields. These pilot programs are intended to provide EPA, states, tribes, municipalities, and communities with useful information and strategies as they continue to seek new methods to promote a unified approach to site assessment, environmental cleanup, and redevelopment.

## BACKGROUND

EPA selected the City of Danbury for a Brownfields Pilot. Danbury, the hub of northern Fairfield County, is a former hat manufacturing center turned corporate base and residential suburban community. Hat-making and related industries were the city's primary economic force until the 1960s. The city has long been known for its Irish, Italian, and Portuguese immigrant communities, and has witnessed a growing Hispanic and Asian population. Data collected in 1996 showed that Danbury contained a labor force of approximately 35,000 with a five percent unemployment rate.

The Pilot project targets two sites. The first, Barnum Court, is a one-half-acre property that formerly contained a 4,400-square-foot factory and a 3,100-square-foot warehouse/garage. The site is in central Danbury, immediately west of Kohanza Brook. The property was used by a series of hat manufacturers from the late nineteenth century until 1952. After this time, the site was used for various services and retail business until 1992, when the property was abandoned after a fire destroyed the main building. The city acquired the site through foreclosure and now seeks to redevelop it. Phase I through III environmental assessments have been conducted, resulting in the

## PILOT SNAPSHOT



Danbury, Connecticut

Date of Announcement:  
September 1997

Amount: \$200,000

Profile: The Pilot targets Barnum Court, a one-half-acre property in the city's urban center that was used by a series of hat manufacturers and other businesses, and the former Mallory Hat Factory, empty since 1987.

### Contacts:

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Visit the EPA Region 1 Brownfields web site at:  
<http://www.epa.gov/region01/remed/brnflld/>

For further information,  
including specific Pilot contacts,  
additional Pilot information, brownfields news and events, and  
publications and links, visit the EPA Brownfields web site at:  
<http://www.epa.gov/brownfields/>

discovery of hat felt wastes and mercury, co-mingled with petroleum hydrocarbons. The investigations indicate that volatile organic compound (VOC) levels in groundwater are above state standards, and that soil contamination consists of VOCs, lead, and mercury. The city's redevelopment efforts have been hindered by the presence of these contaminants.

The second site is the former Mallory Hat Factory, which operated until 1987, when the company went out of business. The site was soon purchased by a prospective developer, who conducted environmental assessments between 1989 and 1991, leading to further investigation of seven areas of potential contamination. In 1998, the city foreclosed on the property due to tax delinquency. An industrial facility adjacent to the hat factory is interested in acquiring the site to create parking for its employees and clients. In order for the purchase to go through, the pre-Pilot assessments must be reviewed, new ones conducted if needed, and a cleanup plan prepared.

## OBJECTIVES

To facilitate redevelopment, the Pilot intends to conduct further site investigation at both sites. The city has established a plan which concurrently pursues the environmental restoration of the sites and the commercial redevelopment of the properties. The projects will demonstrate that municipalities can move forward in the commercial rehabilitation of brownfields by providing an innovative approach to completing the environmental restoration of the sites. The plan will take advantage of the various land use zones applicable to the two parcels within the Barnum Court site, as well as the presence of an interested developer for the Mallory Hat Factory site. The city will also seek to use innovative in-situ environmental cleanup technologies for site cleanup. In order to facilitate redevelopment, the city will temporarily retain ownership over the Mallory Hat site and a portion of the Barnum Court property. After further investigation and cleanup, the city will select appropriate redevelopment proposals and convey ownership through negotiated property transfer agreements.

## ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND ACTIVITIES

The Pilot has:

- Completed a Phase I assessment at the Barnum Court site, which identified soil and groundwater contamination; and
- Developed specifications for Phase III assessment investigations and an in-situ cleanup feasibility study for the Barnum Court site.

The Pilot is :

- Conducting Phase II and III assessments at the Barnum Court site to identify the groundwater contamination source and develop cleanup recommendations and cost estimates;
- Analyzing sediment samples and examining ecological risks at Barnum Court to determine the impact to the riverine ecosystem adjacent to the property; and
- Reviewing background information on the Mallory Hat Factory site, in order to develop an assessment plan for the site.